

Spread Eagle Barrens State Natural Area

[Program Property Page](#)

Other Plans: [Interim Forest Management Plan](#)

Property Overview

Spread Eagle Barrens State Natural Area (SNA) is a 7,779-acre property located in northeastern Florence County near the Michigan border. It was designated as a SNA in 1995. A portion of the Pine-Popple Wild Rivers property abuts the western edge of the SNA and the lower reaches of the Pine River traverse the property. The Menominee River forms a segment of the property's eastern boundary. WE Energies owns a portion of the land within the SNA property boundary along the Pine River; this area is managed under a DNR easement.

Spread Eagle Barrens SNA protects an extensive landscape of bracken grasslands, pine barrens, dry forests, and some kettle lakes and wetlands. Barrens are dominated by scattered jack pine, red pine, northern pin oak, and aspen. The bracken grasslands contain sedges, bracken and sweet fern, a mix of native and non-native grasses, and shrubs such as serviceberry, blueberry, and willows. Frost pockets – treeless depressions where frost may occur at any time of year – are found throughout. Also scattered through the property are depressions that have developed into wetlands, including black spruce-tamarack swamp and shallow seepage lakes with small acid peatlands. The SNA was established to protect the pine barrens and other natural communities and associated flora and fauna that require expansive open landscapes. Many rare or declining open-country species are found here, including many breeding grassland and grass/shrub birds as well as mammals such as black bear, fisher, and badger.

Public Use and Recreation Facilities

The property is open to hunting, fishing, trapping, wildlife viewing, hiking, cross-country skiing, and gathering of wild edibles. The Pine River offers paddling and fishing opportunity. As with most SNAs, recreational facilities are few. DNR maintains one parking area and carry-in boat access site on Sand Lake in the northwestern portion of the property and a rustic campsite on Barrens Lake Road in the northeastern portion of the property. There is another parking area and scenic overlook in the north-central portion of the property, and another four parking areas scattered throughout. Portions of snowmobile trails and ATV routes (on designated town roads) that connect to regional trail networks traverse the property.

Additional recreational facilities, including campgrounds, improved boat access sites, and hiking trails are available on adjacent or nearby Florence County lands or on WE Energies land as part of their Wilderness Shores Recreation Area.

Natural Resources Management

The property is managed as an ecological reference area to restore, maintain, and enhance bracken grasslands and pine barrens through activities such as prescribed fire and timber harvesting. It is also intended to provide opportunities for research and education on the highest quality bracken grasslands. The overall goal for the property is to maintain a significant component of open barrens, bracken grassland, and grass/shrub habitats, some stands with variable, savanna-like structure to be transitional between open and forested habitats, and selected forest stands maintained with standard silvicultural methods, including extended rotations in some situations. A number of existing forested stands are slated for conversion to a more open, barrens-like condition. Conversion methods include commercial timber harvest, prescribed fire, selective herbicide application, and other mechanical treatments. Where the Pine River traverses the property, no vegetation management occurs within



150 feet from the bank on either side of the river in accordance with management of Wild Rivers as specified in NR 302.02(4), Wisconsin Administrative Code.

Special Attributes

The entire Spread Eagle Barrens SNA has been identified by the department as a “Primary Site”. Primary sites generally encompass the best examples of 1) rare and representative natural communities and 2) documented rare species populations with opportunities for restoration or connections. Such sites warrant high protection and/or restoration consideration during the development of a property master plan. Primary Sites can be considered High Conservation Value Forests for Forest Certification.

Spread Eagle Barrens has been identified as a [Wisconsin Important Bird Area](#), a site that provides critical habitat for birds, by the [Wisconsin Bird Conservation Initiative](#), and as a [Conservation Opportunity Area](#) in the [Wisconsin Wildlife Action Plan](#).

